



by Elizabeth Swartz

Your GREEN PAGES

55 Skill-Building Activities You Can Use Right Now!

PRIMARY GRADES

Spin and Search

1 READING Make a color wheel with a spinning arrow. Have each child spin the arrow and then find an object



in the room the same color as the spot on which the arrow has landed. When students are ready, replace the wheel with one that uses only color words.

Counting Jacks

2 MATH Demonstrate for your students counting by twos, then by fives and 10s, while doing jumping jacks. Say the next number when your hands come together above your head.

JANUARY CALENDAR CELEBRATIONS

National Volunteer
Blood Donor Month
Poverty in America
Awareness Month

No Name-Calling Week 1/22-1/26

New Year's Day 1/1

National Write to Congress Day 1/3

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day 1/15

National Handwriting Day 1/23

Missing Letters

3 READING Show your students a set of four or five alphabet letters in order with just one missing. Can they tell which letter is missing? The same large-group or small-group game can be played with a small set of numbers, the days of the week or the months of the year. It can also be played visually with cards or on an overhead projector.

Snowy Footprints

4 SCIENCE/POETRY/ART Use the fun poem below to introduce animal tracks to your students. Then go outside and make animal and kid tracks in the snow. Or, create them in the classroom in clay using chenille sticks to make little squirrel tracks; students can create dog tracks using their thumbs. Also mention that January 21 is Squirrel Appreciation Day. Maybe you could plan to leave a pile of nuts outside the classroom window for our furry friends.

Squirrel Tracks

by Marie Cecchini

*Chitter, chatter,
Scold, scold
Gray squirrels scoot,
Through winter's cold.*

*Over ice,
Over snow,
Leaving footprints
As they go.*

Calendar Count

5 MATH Collect unused sheets from a large desk blotter calendar. Cut apart the date boxes and retain the



squares from the first few days of the month, perhaps the first through the tenth. Laminate the squares. Provide your students with lots of stickers and the squares. Have the kids put the correct number of stickers on each square.

Step by Step

6 READING/ART Make some footprint patterns. On each one write a simple sentence of directions. Put the footprints in order across the table or floor for students to follow when completing a simple project.

Valuable Verbs

7 LANGUAGE Make placards with one action verb written on each. Attach them to a ruler. As students share stories about what they did the night before, what happened in the story they just read or what they are going to write about next, encourage them to raise the valuable verb that best describes the action explained.

Sidewalk Sentences

8 WRITING Give each student a little dish of water and a two-inch sponge brush. On a clean blackboard, dry sidewalk or parking lot, have students write spelling words, story starters or messages to another class.

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Animal Moves

9 READING/EXERCISE Read aloud *From Head to Toe* by Eric Carle (HarperCollins, 1997) while the children act out the motions illustrated in the story. Then challenge them to add more animals to the story along with motions appropriate to those animals.

Picture Problems

10 MATH Provide students with a selection of pictures. Give one to each student to study and ask them to write a math problem that corresponds to the picture. Be sure the problems all make sense and work out correctly. Then compile them into a class booklet of practice problems.

Working Pets

11 SCIENCE/HEALTH January 29, 1929, was the day that The Seeing Eye, North America's first guide dog school, was established. Visit the "frequently asked questions" section of www.seeingeye.org with your students to help them understand the importance of these dogs to people with vision impairments. Ask your librarian for books about working dogs.

Clay Characters

12 ART/WRITING Put out several colors of craft clay or colored dough. Invite the students to mold objects, animals and people. When clay time is over and everyone has some sculptures on their desks, let the free writing time begin.

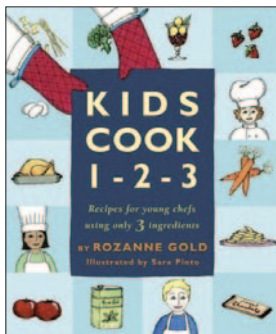
Happy Birthday, Pooh Bear

13 READING/WRITING January 18, the birthday of *Winnie-the-Pooh* author A.A. Milne, is a great day for your class to read favorite Pooh stories at a party in Milne's honor. Help the students plan the party, select books to read aloud and write stories of their own set in the Hundred Acre Wood.

Easy Cooking

14 READING/HEALTH Collect a set of easy recipes calling for only three ingredients, or get the new cook-

book *Kids Cook 1-2-3* by Rozanne Gold (Bloomsbury, 2006). It provides clear directions for recipes requiring only



three ingredients. Try a different recipe each day, from a variation on a peanut butter sandwich to main course dishes, desserts and nutritional snacks.



LUCKY SUBSCRIBER
Teresa Warren
Sachse, TX

Book Bank

15 READING/ART Encourage students to help one another find a good book. Ask students to write the title of a book they've enjoyed, along with the author's name, on one side of a 3" x 5" index card and to illustrate an event or character from the book on the other side. Provide a decorated box in which they can put the cards when completed. Then, whenever someone is looking for a book recommendation, encourage them to browse through the box to find their next fun book.

Weights and Measures

16 MATH/HISTORY Provide two bread recipes – a European recipe in which the measurements follow the metric system and an American recipe with imperial system measurements. Help the class make each, using a scale with grams for one and a measuring cup for the other. When the pioneers traveled across our country, they did away with scales and grams in favor of measuring by tin cup. What else about cooking might have changed to make traveling easier?

Parent Activity

17 MATH Go through a stack of old magazines together and encourage your child to cut out some interesting pictures. Glue each picture to the top of a piece of notebook paper. Make up new stories together about what is happening in the pictures. Give names to people and animals, make up dialogue, decide what they were doing before and what they might do next. Do any of them live together? Be creative but also attentive to details. What can you tell from the pictures about the weather or the time of year?

Rocking and Rolling

18 PHYSICAL EDUCATION/POETRY Ask one student to read the following poem while another acts out the motions. Then have students follow the directions without a leader. Can they add some motions and some verses?

Rock n' Roll
by Jacqueline Schiff

Rock your arms
High and low.
Roll your head
Very slow.
Shoulders rock
To and fro.
Roll them now,
Round they go.

Rock your hips
Side to side.
Roll your eyes
Clockwise wide.

Rock your toes
Up and down.
Roll your thumbs
Round and round.
Rock your bod,
We'll watch it go.
Exercise!
Rock n' Roll

Musical Motivation

19 MUSIC/EXERCISE Invite your students to bring in music to do yoga by one day and music to dance to another day. Discuss what type of music

works best for yoga or dancing. Is there a particular kind of music that inspires kids to run or skip rope? Experiment with many different pieces of music to determine which is best for each exercise type.

My Diner

20 **WRITING/NUTRITION** Invite the students to each plan his or her own diner or restaurant. This can be a parallel to the main idea of a story. What food will be served? Have them each design an appropriate menu for their diner using the food pyramid to be sure each meal is nutritious. They can design and create menu covers, etc.

Walking the Dog

21 **HEALTH/EXERCISE/SCIENCE** January is Walk Your Pet Month. Perhaps you could organize a pet parade through your school. If that's not allowed, make charts and maps for where students exercise their compan-



ion animals and how often. This would also be a great time for students to research the background and specialties of their own pets and create an oral report, poster or PowerPoint presentation on the subject.

Write to Me

22 **WRITING/HANDWRITING** National Handwriting Day is January 23, John Hancock's birthday. Teach your students about the man, who was so proud of putting his signature on the Declaration of Independence that he wanted to write it large enough for King George to be able to read without his

glasses. Then have your students practice their own signatures. This is a great day for students to write a letter longhand to a far-away friend or relative.

Inside Out

23 **WRITING/POINT OF VIEW** As a class, write a story about a classroom hamster that gets loose in the school. Then make arrangements for your class to go to the far end of the parking lot or across the street from the school. Now write a large-group story about a squirrel who is trying to find a place at the school to store his winter nut supply. Compare and contrast the school setting based on point of view.

Weather Trackers

24 **SOCIAL STUDIES/SCIENCE** Assign each student in your class a city and state (other than where you live). Provide the students with blank calendars on which to record the daily temperature and precipitation in that location. Suggest they reference the daily weather map in *USA Today* or visit www.weather.com Post the temperature and precipitation amounts for your area on the board daily for comparison. At the end of a two-week period, ask students how their lives would be different in the various locations due to the weather.

MIDDLE GRADES

Coordination Challenge

25 **READING/ART/PHYSICAL EDUCATION** The first challenge with this activity is to follow the directions. Place a ruler, a ball of string, a package of foam balls and a package of



medium-sized paper cups on a table. Put these directions on the table: Select a cup and a foam ball. Measure and cut off a 12-inch piece of string. Glue one end of the string to the ball. Glue the other end of the string to the bottom of the inside of the cup. Let it dry overnight. Try catching the ball in the cup with your writing hand. Then try catching it with your other hand. How many times can you catch it in one minute? Is it the same time for both hands?

Design Time

26 **PERSUASIVE WRITING** Ask the students to write down some ideas for designing their own video game. Once they have the basics determined, ask them to write some advertising for the new games that might persuade others to buy it. Design and create the cover for the box. Hang them up without any names on them and invite a different class to come in to read the ads and see the boxes. Ask them to write down which one game they would buy. After the visit, read the results and discuss why some ads were more persuasive than others.

A Matter of Time

27 **READING** Talk about time and what it represents before beginning to read aloud *Journey to the Blue Moon: In Which Time Is Lost and Then Found Again* by Rebecca Rupp (Candlewick, 2006). This humor-filled fantasy involves travel in a rickety spaceship flown by mice and alludes to the message that people either choose to use time or lose it. The idea of good intentions is lightly touched upon and will lead to discussions about how your students use "free" time as well as thoughts about their futures.



How Soil Settles

28 **SCIENCE** In a Mason jar, add 1/2 cup each of sand, potting soil,

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soil from outdoors and small pebbles. Add water until the jar is about 3/4 full. Close the jar tightly and shake. Let it sit overnight. The next day, observe the soil with a magnifying glass. Have students describe what has happened to the soil and talk about why it happened.

A Peaceful Protest

29 SOCIAL STUDIES/READING/ART Read about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. with your class. Discuss what a peaceful protest encompasses. Select an issue that students might like to see changed, maybe having to do with schedules, lunches or homework. Arrange a time when your students can stage a peaceful protest in the lobby. Discuss procedures to affect change and help them make informational posters. Ask administrators to meet with the students to discuss their concerns.

Expandable Fun

30 ART Have students draw a picture that pertains to a current area of study. Lay a transparency over the picture. Have them trace the outline of the picture. Then place the transparency on the overhead to show the change in size. Let them trace the new picture onto a large piece of paper for a mural. What makes the picture grow? Move the projector backwards and forwards; why does the image change?

Parent Activity

31 COMPUTER SKILLS/NUTRITION Visit the website www.cooks.com with your kids to look up some healthy and easy recipes good for this time of year. Spend an afternoon following the directions for an old-fashioned vegetable soup, a nutritious cornstarch pudding or a modern trail mix. Encourage your children do all the measuring and mixing. Print your new recipes and use them to begin a collection the kids will remember and refer to for years.

Passport Privileges

32 RESEARCH/SOCIAL STUDIES Passports have been used for

centuries to insure safe passage for citizens of one country or tribe through another. Research the passports that were particular wooden carvings of African tribes. Compare these with pass-



ports of today. How have passports changed? How are they the same? Work with another class and have each class design a passport to allow students to pass from one class to the other.

Delightful Details

33 WRITING Select a window in a school and have students write a description of what they see when they look through the window, including as many details as possible. Then provide binoculars and repeat the writing exercise. What does this tell us about details? What can it suggest about writing scenes? How can we find details when we can't use binoculars?

How Funny Is It?

34 WRITING/HUMOR Ask your students to collect examples of humor, other than jokes, in things they are reading. Discuss what elements seem funny: something out of place, exaggeration, a complete opposite, a surprise ending, etc. Then encourage students to experiment with using humor in everyday writing. Share examples with one another and discuss what works and what doesn't.

Dear Congressperson

35 SOCIAL STUDIES Help your students research the names and addresses of your state senators and representatives. Discuss which issues that are relevant to your voting district

are coming up in Congress. Are the parents of your students losing jobs? Do they need health benefits? Has your school lost federal funding? Encourage students to write letters to members of Congress explaining the needs of their families and school. Share the replies as they are received. Have students keep scrapbooks of news clippings of the way your senators and representatives vote and the things they say in speeches.

Plenty o' Oatmeal

36 SOCIAL STUDIES/HEALTH In 2005, people in America purchased 24 million pounds of oatmeal. That was a 20% increase over the previous year. What could account for this increase? Ask your students to check at home – how many pounds does your class have in their pantries right now? How many different ways do your students eat oatmeal – with apples, with raisins, with brown sugar, with milk? Make a tally of favorite oatmeal toppings, then convert it to a bar graph. Collect favorite oatmeal recipes from your class to compile in a cookbook.

Eskimo Totem Pole

37 SOCIAL STUDIES/ART Research the content and purpose of totem poles. Then provide "in the shell" nuts, such as walnuts and almonds, for students to decorate with paints or markers. Hot glue (with assistance) the nuts onto a wooden craft stick, beginning at the top. Leave an inch at the bottom free. Shape a base out of clay and push the bottom of the totem pole stick into the base.

From My Eyes

38 READING/POINT OF VIEW The Salem Witch Trials are always a topic of fascination for students, but particularly when they can be seen from the eyes of someone their own age. Read aloud *My Side of the Story: Salem Witch* by Patricia Hermes (Kingfisher, 2006). This book tells the stories of two children having very different experiences during this fearful time in our nation's history. Students will learn that,

as in all times of tragedy, the entire family and community are affected. After reading this historical fiction, have students research to find what is now accepted as the cause for the scare.



LUCKY SUBSCRIBER

Susan Hansbarger
Fort Wayne, IN

An Outdoor Friend

39 **MATH/LANGUAGE ARTS** Make a class snowman. Describe its properties, height, chest measurement, head measurement, etc. Record the air



temperature and the snowman's temperature. Predict when it will melt. Figure out its mass and volume. Record changes each day and update predictions. Write fiction and nonfiction stories about the snowman.

Build a Story

40 **WRITING** Pass out six blank craft sticks to each student. Have

students use thin markers or pens to write the following on the craft sticks: Write one character on each of two sticks. On another stick write a time of the year or a time of the day. On another write a place, indoor or out. On each of the last two write one problem – for example, something is lost, broken, on fire, in trouble, etc. Provide a prepared can for each set of sticks: characters, setting, plot. When students are building a new story, encourage them to pick two sticks from each can to get started.

Equal Rights Day

41 **SOCIAL STUDIES** For an eye-opening look at equal rights, have your class spend one whole day experiencing unequal rights. From the time you walk into school, treat all the students who wear eyeglasses (or who are wearing the color blue or have blond hair, etc.) as VIPs. Move their seats, lessen their work load, give them treats, send them to lunch first, etc. Don't tell the other students what you are doing; let them figure it out. Stop the experiment when necessary and discuss its purpose. Do the students see parallels to this preferential treatment anywhere in life?

Sticks and Stones

42 **HEALTH** The third week in January has been designated as No Name-Calling Week in hopes of curbing bullying. Have a brainstorming session with your students about name calling. Why do we do it? What kinds of names do we use? Make a list of silly

names to use instead of hurtful names. See if using the silly names reduces tense situations. If not, why not? Discuss the difference between name calling and using nicknames. Can your students go a whole day with everyone using everyone else's proper names? How about a whole week? Create some hallway posters for No Name-Calling Week illustrating that it is against the rules in your school to call people names.

Boomerangs in Flight

43 **SCIENCE/ART** Get your students interested in flight of all kinds by building boomerangs from manila fold-



ers. Complete directions, as well as links to information about what makes different styles of boomerangs work, can be found at www.grc.nasa.gov/WWW/K-12/TRC/Aeronautics/Four_Wing_Boomerang.html

INTERMEDIATE GRADES

Miles of Baskets

44 **MATH/SOCIAL STUDIES** Obtain a copy of your school's basketball schedule. Use a map or visit www.mapquest.com to determine the location for each basketball game and its distance from your school. Calculate how long it will take to travel to each place, factoring in the traffic. Create new basketball schedules in the computer lab using a spreadsheet that will include distance and time information.

Chinese Fireworks

45 **SOCIAL STUDIES/SCIENCE** Gunpowder was actually discovered by accident by the Chinese, but its use is popular during Chinese New Year celebrations, when fireworks will light

ABOUT THE GREEN PAGES: Green Pages activities are for use in teaching grades PreK through 8. Activities are labeled according to basic skill areas.

READER CONTRIBUTIONS: We invite your submissions. Please send idea(s) with your Social Security number and a SASE to: Elizabeth Swartz, P.O. Box 500, Turbotville, PA 17772 or greenpages@TeachingK-8.com Teaching K-8 pays \$10 per accepted submission.

THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTIONS:

Sherry Timberman, Kennebunk, ME, #10 & #25; Marie Cechinni, West Dundee, IL #28 & #37.

POETRY: "Squirrel Tracks" by Marie Cechinni, West Dundee, IL. "Rock n' Roll" by Jacqueline Schiff, Moline IL. "Star Gazers" by Heidi Bee Roemer, Orland Park, IL.

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the sky in many areas. Use this experiment to help explain the scientific event. Fill an empty film canister halfway with water. Drop in one Alka-Seltzer tablet and immediately put on the lid. Turn the canister upside down on a table (clear the table beforehand of anything that might get wet) and stand back. Have the students design a study using differing amounts of water and differing amount of Alka-Seltzer.

Frame It

46 DRAMA/WRITING Bring in an empty picture frame for students to stand behind when doing dramatic readings or showing emotions for others to describe in writing. Suspend the frame from the ceiling or ask for two students to volunteer to stand on either side and hold the frame. Have students conduct one-act plays behind it as you videotape for them to later watch and critique.

Research Ready

47 RESEARCH/CITATIONS Students in grades 5-12 can get help creating citations for web-based resources by going to the website <http://21cif.imsa.edu/tools/citation> and using the printable form. There are also other excellent research tips at this site.

Practice with Purpose

48 READING While practicing fluency and expression, record your students reading aloud children's books. Then present the audio tape or CD recordings to an elementary classroom or library for younger students to enjoy.

Calendar Math

49 MATH Post the calendar for the current month. Have students calculate how many minutes of each week they will be in school. How many minutes each day? How many minutes each day do they sleep? How many minutes each day do they spend doing chores? How many minutes getting to and from school? Let them calculate minutes for any activity they choose.

Look at the data gathered. What does it say about a typical day? Week? What would they like to change? Discuss ratios between activities.

Awesome Astronomers

50 POETRY/SCIENCE Read the following poem several times to your class. Talk about the rhythm. How does the rhythm relate to the context of the poem?

Star Gazers

by Heidi Bee Roemer

*Astronomers question.
They truly delight in
the jaw-dropping, mind-boggling
facts that they find in*

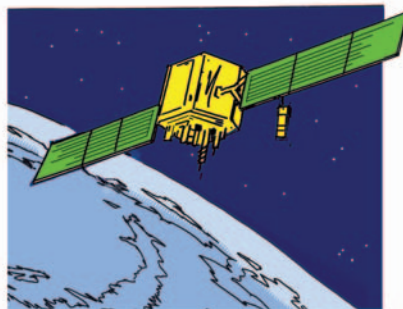
*the Milky Way's size
as it swirls in space,
mysterious black holes,
and the moon's cratered face.*

*Astronomers study
the black pitch of sky.
They probe asteroids and planets.
They ask "How?" and "Why?"*

*With powerful scopes,
they see wonders afar –
the streak of a comet,
the birth of a star.*

The GPS Mystery

51 SCIENCE Introduce your students to how the GPS (Global



Positioning System) works. Visit the Library of Congress Everyday Mysteries website at www.loc.gov/rr/scitech/mysteries/global.html for explanations and great pictures of the earth from

satellites. In what situations might your students find GPS valuable? Does it make the compass outdated?

Parent Activity

52 SOCIAL STUDIES January is Poverty in America Awareness Month. What can you as a family do to help alleviate poverty in America? Are there area soup kitchens or food pantries to which you can bring the kids to help on a Saturday? Box up clothes no longer worn or wanted and take them to the local homeless shelter, Salvation Army or Goodwill. What ideas do your children have about helping others? Take an active role this month and keep it going.

Quality Counts

53 SOCIAL STUDIES/READING/ART Read aloud or in literature circles *A Single Shard* by Linda Sue Park (Clarion, 2001). Show small sections of various pieces of art by copying portions of famous artwork as well as portions of children's work. Can your students tell quality by just seeing a part? Try a taste test – can they judge quality from a tiny taste of a store-bought cookie versus a home-baked cookie? What do these tests tell the children about quality? Is quality subjective? What do their conclusions say about work of any kind?

Rugs Ready to Roll

54 MATH Provide construction paper tiles with right angles that are 12" long. Have students build the area of a rug for an 8' x 12' room. Check local prices and select a midrange price for them to use in calculating how much that rug would cost.

Our Parallel World

55 MATH/ SOCIAL STUDIES View your community through geometric glasses by having students look for parallels. Start with roads and telephone lines, then move on to grocery aisles, malls, etc. Take pictures, make drawings and then try to decide why people seem so drawn to parallels. ♣